THE MINISTRY OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI OMAR ABDULLAH): (a) to (c) During the visit of H.E. Hamid Karzai Chairman of the Afghan Interim Administration to India on 26-27 February 2002, many areas were identified for bilateral cooperation, including proposals for assistance in the field for Agriculture. Through subsequent technical discussions, including during the visit of Afghan Minister of Agriculture Mr. Seyyed Hussain Anwari in April this year, steps have been taken to provide assitance, *inter alia*, through supply of seeds, equipment and training of personnel.

SAARC Finance and Planning Ministers' meeting on Poverty Alleviation

5310. SHRI A. VIJAYA RAGHAVAN: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the latest SAARC Finance and Planning Ministers' meeting on poverty alleviation has endorsed an action plan for full operationalisation of the South Asia Preferential Trade Agreement (SAPTA) and move faster towards South Asia Free Trade Agreement (SAFTA);

(b) if so, the details of the action plan along with the details of the Indian experiment on poverty alleviation reflected in the above meetng; and

(c) the steps taken, if any for more flexibility in the matters related to Intellectual Property Rights of developing country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI OMAR ABDULLAH): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) the Action Plan recommended internal policies including the need for good governance, sound macro-economic policies, decentralization, empowerment of local government micro-credits, expansion of social safety nets and better targeting of benefits on both urban and rual poor.

External policies recommendation include asking developed countries for increased ODA, greater market excess, reducing of burden of external borrowings and debts and preventing outflow of illegal and tax evaded money from the region.

The conference benefited from the vast Indian experience which was shared in the discussions, and many of the recommendations of the Action Plan reflect this Indian contribution.

(c) The conference recommended seeking flexibility for developing countries in Intellectual property rights, relecting the general demand of developing countries world wide at the WTO and other fera.

Opening of a Mission School in Oman

5311. SHRI P. PRABHAKAR REDDY:
SHRI B.J. PANDA:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news-item which appeared in the Hindustan Time dated the 26th April, 2002 under the caption "Indian Mission's schools for scandal".

(b) whether Oman Government have indicated Indian Exmassy in Oman for having allowed an Indian to open a private school against the laws of that country;

(c) what is the in-built mechanism to check and control misuse of influence in his Ministry to aviod reoccurrence of such cases; and

(b) the action taken by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI OMAR ABDULLAH): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) and (d) Do not arise.

Cultural Heritages in the vaults of Imperial Powers

5312. SHRI K. RAMA MOHANA RAO: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether several Indian cultural heritages are locked up in the vaults of imperial powers like U.K., Portugal and France;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the action taken to procure them back?